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Tahltan language

Tahltan, **Tāłtān**, also called **Tałtan ʒ̱āke** ("Tahltan people language"), **dah dʒ̱āhge** ("our language") or **didene keh** ("this people's way") is a poorly documented Northern Athabaskan language historically spoken by the Tahltan people (also "Nahanni") who live in northern British Columbia around Telegraph Creek, Dease Lake, and Iskut. Tahltan is a critically endangered language.[3] Several linguists classify Tahltan as a dialect of the same language as Tagish and Kaska (Krauss and Golla 1981, Mithun 1999).

Tahltan	
Tałtan ʒ̱āke, *dah dʒ̱āhge*, *didene keh*	
Native to	Canada
Ethnicity	2,460 Tahltan people (2014, FPCC)[1]
Native speakers	45 (2014, FPCC)[1]
Language family	Dené–Yeniseian? ▪ Na-Dené ▪ Athabaskan ▪ Northern Athabaskan ▪ Central Cordillera ▪ **Tahltan**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`tht`
Glottolog	`tahl1239 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tahl1239)`[2]

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Language revitalization

As of May 2013, language researcher Dr. Judy Thompson estimated that there are 30 Tahltan speakers. A new Language and Culture office is exploring evening "language immersion" classes, a Master-Apprentice program, and creating a "language nest" for teaching the language to young children. Scholarships are planned for part-time language learners.[4]

Lacking written documentation, it was unclear to the language revitalization coordinator how to teach the language, and how to explain the grammar. "After a year of study, Oscar Dennis says he, along with Reginald and Ryan Dennis, have finally cracked the code on Tahltan language's fundamental patterns."[5] As a Dene language, like Navajo, Tahltan has "encoded" patterns in which small pieces are added to words to create meaning. "Dr. Gregory Anderson from the Living Tongues Institute visited our territory, and was so impressed with the team's work that he said he 'couldn't improve upon it.'"[5]

A digital archive of Tahltan recordings, located "at the Tahltan Language Revitalization Offices in Dease Lake, Iskut and Telegraph Creek" can be used on iPods.[5]

Phonology

Consonants

There are 47 consonant sounds[6]:

		Bilabial	Dental		Inter-dental	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar		Uvular	Glottal
			central	lateral				plain	labial		
Nasal	plain	m	n								
	voiceless		n̥								
	glottalized		nˈ								
Plosive	voiced	b									
	unaspirated		t					k	kʷ	q	
	aspirated		tʰ					kʰ	kʷʰ	qʰ	
	ejective		tˈ					kˈ	kˈʷ	qˈ	ʔ
Affricate	unaspirated		ts	tɬ	tθ	tʃ					
	aspirated		tsʰ	tɬʰ	tθʰ	tʃʰ					
	ejective		tsˈ	tɬˈ	tθˈ	tʃˈ					
Fricative	voiceless		s	ɬ	θ	(ʃ)		x	xʷ	χ	h
	voiced		z	ɮ	ð	(ʒ)		ɣ	ɣʷ	ʁ	
Approximant							j		w		

Phonemes /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are very limited in use and may or may not be phonemes.

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back	
Close	i		u	
	ɪ		ʊ	
Mid	ɛ	ə	ʌ	o
Open			ɑ	

[6]

Phonological processes

- Vowel flattening.
- Consonant harmony
- Vowel nasalization
- Vowel laxing

References

1. Tahltan (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/tht/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Tahltan" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tahl1239). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Alderete, John forthcoming: On tone length in Tahltan (Northern Athabaskan) (http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/jaldere1/ttonogen1.pdf). In: Hargus, Sharon and Keren Rice (eds.): *Athabaskan Prosody*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
4. "Learn Tahltan language, save our culture" (http://www.tahltan.org/news/learn-tahltan-language-save-our-culture). *Tahltan Central Council*. 2013-05-03. Retrieved 2013-05-14.
5. "Mystery of Tahltan language "code" revealed" (http://www.tahltan.org/news/mystery-tahltan-language-%E2%80%9Ccode%E2%80%9D-revealed). *Tahltan Central Council*. 2013-05-03. Retrieved 2013-05-14.
6. Alderete, John, Blenkiron, Amber (2014). *Tahltan grammar synopsis* (https://www.sfu.ca/~alderete/pubs/aldereteBlenkiron2014_tahltanGrammarSynopsis.pdf) (PDF). Simon Fraser University.

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External links

- Tahltan Central Council language page (http://www.tahltan.org/nation/language)
- OLAC resources in and about the Tahltan language (http://www.language-archives.org/language/tht)
- Alderete, John, Tanya Bob and Thomas McIlwraith. An annotated bibliography of Tahltan language materials (http://www.firstnations.de/media/05-3-bibliography.pdf)

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